

**West Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Policy**

Graduation Requirements**I. Introduction**

To graduate from West Hartford Public Schools a student must have satisfactorily earned a minimum of 21.75 units of credit and must have met the credit distribution requirement. Students must also meet four performance standards: reading/writing, mathematics, science, and technology. The district's performance standards in reading/writing and mathematics shall take effect for the class of 2006. The district's performance standards in science and technology shall take effect for the class of 2007.

II. Credit Distribution

The following courses must be passed:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| A. English | 4 units |
| B. Mathematics | 3 units |
| C. Science | 2 units |
| 1 unit physical science | |
| 1 unit life science | |
| D. Arts and/or Technical Education | 1 unit |
| E. Social Studies | 3 units |
| 1 unit in U.S. history | |
| 1 unit in world civilization | |
| ½ unit in American government | |
| ½ unit elective | |
| F. Physical Education & Health | 1.75 units |
| G. Electives | 7 units |

Upon recommendation of the high school principal and approval of the Superintendent of Schools, this requirement for graduation may be met, in part, on an equivalency basis as designated in the administrative regulations.

III. District's Performance Standards

- A. **Reading/Writing:** Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, produce an essay based upon an assigned reading that is focused, organized, elaborated and edited for Standard English conventions.
- B. **Math:** Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, demonstrate an ability to perform mathematical operations, to include working with fractions and decimals, in order to solve multi-step problems in algebraic and applied settings. Certain tasks will either require students to explain their procedures or justify answers in writing.

- C. **Science:** Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, demonstrate an ability to perform science investigational skills and competencies.
- D. **Technology:** Students shall, prior to completion of their senior year, demonstrate technology competency through discipline-specific learning.

Upon graduation, each student who has met these requirements will be presented with a high school diploma.

**West Hartford Public Schools
Administrative Regulations for Graduation**

I. Performance Standards

- A. Reading/Writing: Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, produce an essay based upon an assigned reading that is focused, organized, elaborated and edited for Standard English conventions.
- B. Math: Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, demonstrate an ability to perform mathematical operations, to include working with fractions and decimals, in order to solve multi-step problems in algebraic and applied settings. Certain tasks will either require students to explain their procedures or justify answers in writing.
- C. Science: Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, demonstrate an ability to perform science investigational skills and competencies. Students will define a problem for investigation or experiment by identifying the variables; design and conduct a scientific investigation or experiment; write detailed descriptive observations of qualitative variables; accurately measure quantitative variables including correct units; organize and display data in writing, data tables, and/or graphs; form and judge the validity of conclusions as supported by observations and data.
- D. Technology: Students shall, prior to completion of their senior year, demonstrate technology competency through discipline-specific learning. Students will create a variety of products which demonstrate the ability to use word processing and/or desktop publishing software, spreadsheet and database software, multimedia authoring tools, subject-specific technology tools, and electronic research tools.

II. Meeting the District Performance Standard

- A. In order to meet the District Performance Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science students must score at level 3 or higher on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) test administered in May of the sophomore year. The CAPT will be administered in accordance with State Department of Education (SDE) directives. In order to meet the district performance standard for technology, students must complete all items on the technology competency checklist, as certified by professional staff.
- B. If a student does not meet the district performance standards on the CAPT or does not complete all items on the technology competency checklist, other options will be provided by the senior year (see section III).
- C. Exemption Situations
 - 1. Transfers: Students who transfer into the West Hartford Public Schools and are granted senior status, may be exempted from West Hartford's performance standards for graduation.
 - 2. Special Needs: Students with special needs may be exempt from district performance standards for graduation as described in this policy if so indicated in their Individual Education Plan.
 - 3. English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): Students who are exempt from the CAPT administration because of their ESOL status may be exempt from district performance standards for graduation as described in this policy if so indicated by the ESOL review team.

III. Options if Standards Are Not Met through the Tenth-Grade CAPT Administration or through the Completion of the Technology Competency Checklist.

- A. Reading and Writing: The district standard is a score at level 3 or higher on both the reading and writing sections of the CAPT. If a student does not meet both of these standards, additional assessment opportunities will be provided. The district will designate three options over the course of a student's junior and senior years to meet the performance standard.

Option 1. Students in their junior year can retake the section of the CAPT on which they failed to meet the West Hartford standard.

Option 2. Students can take an assessment comparable to the CAPT designed by the district. Students must receive a score of 7 or above (out of 12) using the CAPT rubric.

Option 3. Students who by the beginning of their senior year have not satisfactorily met the district's performance standard in reading and writing, and who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a reading and writing non-credit course and satisfactorily meet the performance standard at the end of this course. This non-credit course is required in addition to the 4 English units of credit required for graduation.

- B. Mathematics: The district standard is a score at level 3 or higher on the mathematics section of the CAPT. If a student does not meet this standard, additional assessment opportunities will be provided. The district will designate three options over the course of a student's junior and senior years to meet the performance standard.

Option 1. Students in their junior year can retake the math section of the CAPT.

Option 2. Students can take an assessment comparable to the CAPT designed by the district. Students must receive a score comparable to level 3 on the CAPT.

Option 3. Students who by the beginning of their senior year have not satisfactorily met the district's performance standard in mathematics, and who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a mathematics non-credit course and satisfactorily meet the performance standard at the end of this course. This non-credit course is required in addition to the 3 math credits required for graduation.

- C. Science: The district standard is a score at level 3 or higher on the science section of the CAPT. If a student does not meet this standard, additional assessment opportunities will be provided. The district will designate three options over the course of a student's junior and senior years to meet the performance standard.

Option 1. Students in their junior year can retake the science section of the CAPT.

Option 2. Students can take an assessment comparable to the experimental component of the science CAPT designed by the district. Students must receive a score comparable to level 3 on the experimental component of the science CAPT.

Option 3. Students who by the beginning of their senior year have not satisfactorily met the district's performance standard in science, and who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a science non-credit course and satisfactorily meet the performance standard at the end of this course. This non-credit course is required in addition to the 2 science credits required for graduation.

- D. Technology: Students, who by the end of the junior year have not satisfactorily met the district's performance standard in technology and who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to successfully complete one of the following:

Option 1. Students can take one or more high school courses, which have been identified as providing direct technology competency opportunities, and complete the checklist to meet the district performance standard.

Option 2. Students can complete an independent study contract that completes the checklist to meet the district performance standard.

Option 3. Students can complete one or more courses in a pre-approved off-campus institution, which have been identified as containing activities that complete the checklist to meet the district performance standard.

IV. Failure to Meet the Graduation Requirements

If a senior is not eligible for graduation with the class due to failure to meet the graduation credit requirements and/or performance standards, then the student may:

- A. Enroll in summer school and meet the requirements or
- B. Enroll in courses pre-approved by the administration and meet the requirement or
- C. Make special arrangements for re-testing to meet the performance standard as outlined in section III or
- D. Return to high school as a fifth year student and meet the requirements.

V. Notification

Students in jeopardy of not graduating due to failure to meet the graduation requirements and/or performance standards, and their parents/guardians, will be formally notified in writing of their status by the administration. The notification will occur at the end of each semester beginning in January of the student's junior year.

VI. Appeals

Students whose score on the district assessment does not meet the performance standard may appeal their score. Students and/or parent(s)/guardians must submit a written request for an appeal to the principal within 20 school days of receiving their score.

The principal will communicate the results of the re-assessment to the student and parent(s)/guardian within 20 school days of receipt of the appeal.

VII. Credit Options

- A. Children with specific learning disabilities may be granted exceptions to specific course requirements when these disabilities require alternative approaches to instruction. The specific disabilities requiring exceptions and/or equivalency programs may include:
 - 1. neurological handicaps
 - 2. partial or total loss of sight and/or hearing
 - 3. cerebral palsy
 - 4. speech impairments
 - 5. orthopedic handicaps
 - 6. emotional disturbances

The Superintendent, upon recommendation of the principal, will grant specific exemptions or equivalent credit to those youngsters suffering from any one or combinations of these handicaps in instances where the professional staff deems such action to serve the best interests of the student.

- B. The Superintendent, upon recommendation of the principal, may grant equivalent credit for community experience involving work and study outside the school in courses offered through the work/study program, community school, and other similar projects. The mathematics involved in actual sales work, auto mechanics, computer maintenance, restaurant operation, home construction, etc., can be considered as reasonable equivalents of classroom work in individual cases where the professional staff deems such to serve the best interests of the student.
- C. Some students may request in-depth study and work through specialized study or research at such educational agencies as universities, libraries, and museums in the United States or abroad. Such students may apply for exemption from requirements or for equivalent credit.

The Superintendent, upon recommendation of the principal, may grant an exemption or equivalent credit for individual students for in-depth training through out-of-school exposure after consideration of the following:

1. Recommendation for program modification by members of the professional staff
 2. Conference with parents
 3. Accreditation status, if any, of any educational institution involved (e.g. University of Barcelona, Spain; University of Hartford, etc.)
 4. Credit by examination after the completion of an appropriate out-of-school experience
- D. Among our high school population, there are students capable of graduating from high school after three years or interested in early admission to a college or university.

Upon receipt of the student's application for early graduation or college admission, the Superintendent, upon recommendation of the principal, may grant specific fourth year credit exemptions when such exemptions appear to be in the student's best interest. Prior to granting such exemptions, the Superintendent may require fourth year study in the West Hartford Summer School or course credit via an examination—measures which might be taken only if the proposed college course descriptions appear to warrant such supplementary performance procedures. In cases of those students who desire to spend a fourth year in independent study prior to college entrance, a plan for such independent study should be submitted by the student and approved by teachers and principal.

Any request for waiver of credits, either for early admission to college or early graduation, should be approved by the student's teachers, guidance counselor and building principal and then forwarded to the Superintendent for his approval. Relevant to early graduation requirements, it should be noted that students requesting credit waivers are required to present evidence of having taken one year of physical education for each year that he or she attended high school.